

REMARKS

Status of the Claims

Claims 8-12 are pending in this application, with Claim 8 being the sole independent claim. Claim 8 has been amended. Claim 12 has been added. Support for the new claim and claim changes can be found in the original disclosure, and therefore no new matter has been added.

Requested Action

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejection in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Rejection

Claims 8-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 7,116,363 (Fuchimukai) in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0031347 (Fukuda).

In response, while not conceding the propriety of the rejection, independent Claim 8 has been amended. Applicant submits that as amended, this claim is allowable for the following reasons.

Independent Claim 8 relates to an image pickup apparatus comprising an image pickup device for converting an object image into an electrical signal, an exterior member comprising front and rear covers, each extending from a first side to a second side of the apparatus, and a chassis, extending from the first side to the second side of the apparatus.

Independent Claim 8 also recites that the chassis comprises first bent portions positioned at opposing ends of the chassis, fixed to the front and rear covers of the exterior member by a plurality of fixing members formed on the first bent portions in order to fix the chassis to the exterior member, and a second bent portion formed between the first bent portions.

Claim 8 has been amended to recite an image pickup apparatus comprising a lens barrel and an image display unit. Claim 8 has also been amended to recite that the chassis is disposed at least between the lens barrel and the image display unit.

In contrast, the citations to Fuchimukai and Fukuda are not understood to disclose or suggest a chassis disposed at least between the lens barrel and the image display unit, the chassis extending from first to second sides of the apparatus and comprising a first bent portion positioned at opposing ends thereof and fixed to the front and rear covers of an exterior member by a plurality of fixing members, and a second bent portion formed between the first bent portions, as recited by amended Claim 8. Rather, the Fuchimukai patent is understood to merely show that the mount frame 4 (the element the Office Action identifies as corresponding to the chassis) is positioned to the side of the lens barrel 35, as seen in Figure 2. Moreover, there does not appear to be any disclosure of an image display unit in this patent or that the mount frame is disposed between an image display unit and the lens barrel 35. And the Fukuda publication is understood to merely show chassis 3 and 4 disposed to the side of a lens mount 6 and in an indeterminate position with respect to a finder eyepiece portion 13.

In addition, neither the Fuchimukai patent, nor the Fukuda publication are understood to disclose or suggest the concept of first bent portions of a chassis positioned at opposing ends of the chassis and fixed to front and rear covers of an exterior member by

a plurality of fixing members formed on the first bent portions in order to fix the chassis to the exterior member, as recited by amended Claim 1. In this regard, the Office Action admits that the Fuchimukai patent fails to disclose such first bent portions and for that reason cites the Fukuda publication. But the Fukuda publication is understood to merely show chasses 3 and 4 connecting front and rear chasses 1 and 2. The chasses 3 and 4 are not understood to disclose any bent portions, let alone bent portions having fixing members to fix front and rear covers of an exterior member to the chasses 3 and 4.

Since amended Claim 8 is understood to recite at least two features not disclosed or suggested by the citations to Fuchimukai and Fukuda, Applicant respectfully submits that the Office has not yet established a prima facie case of obviousness against amended Claim 8. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of Claim 8 be withdrawn.

The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable, due to their dependency from the independent base claims, as well as due to additional features that are recited. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully solicited.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the application is now in allowable form. Therefore, early passage to issue is respectfully solicited.

Any fee required in connection with this paper should be charged to Deposit Account No. 06-1205.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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